

Monday 29th June 2020

Expert Panel Announced for East Kent Maternity Investigation

The Independent Investigation into East Kent Maternity services today announced its full panel.

Dr Bill Kirkup, who is leading the investigation, will be assisted by five experts across the fields of obstetrics, midwifery, neonatal medicine, clinical governance and information management, it was revealed today.

The full panel will meet for the first time on June 29, but the investigation has already started scrutinising its first cases after being officially opened in April.

The first phase of work has involved contacting the families known to be involved. The panel meeting will take stock of what has been learnt so far and consider next steps.

Dr Kirkup said:

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My independent investigation will be able to call on a wide range of expertise across the field of maternity care.

It is important that the families are able to meet the panel to ensure that the investigation answers the range of important concerns emerging.

Using video conferencing gives us the opportunity to do so while the Covid-19 restrictions remain.

I am delighted to have secured the services of an expert panel with the skills and experience necessary to assess all the concerns.

The expert Panel comprises:

- **Heather Brown** (Obstetrics), Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, and Deputy Medical Director at Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust.
- **Valerie Clare** (Midwifery), Head of Midwifery and Divisional Nurse Director at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust.
- **Helen Mactier** (Neonatology), Consultant Neonatologist at the Princess Royal Maternity in Glasgow and Honorary Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Glasgow.

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- **Alison Fuller** (Clinical Governance), Deputy Director of Governance in a range of NHS Trusts and currently Associate Chief Nurse for Governance at West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust.
- **Denise McDonagh** (Information Management) who has over 30 years' experience in the public and private sectors specialising in IT and data and the operational methods underpinning systems and services.

Dr Kirkup said:

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I would like to thank the families for the way they have engaged with the investigation already, including providing the papers they have collected, which has been a great help in getting the investigation up and running.

I would also like to thank East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust for engaging with the investigation and assembling relevant medical records for scrutiny.

In April, Dr Kirkup said that he hoped any families with concerns about the maternity services in East Kent would contact the investigation team and he reiterated that today.

Notes to Editors

1. The investigation will be looking at the maternity and neonatal services provided by East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.
2. Dr Kirkup is leading the investigation after heading an inquiry into maternity services at Morecambe Bay Hospital which reported in 2015 and being part of the groundbreaking Hillsborough Independent Panel.
3. Short biographies of Dr Kirkup and the panel members are available, from 2.00 pm on Monday, 29 June, on the independent investigation's website: <https://www.iiekms.org.uk>
4. The investigation will also be supported by two specialist advisers, Nicky Lyon and James Titcombe.
5. The panel will be meeting further families next month.
6. The Terms of Reference for the investigation will be finalised and completed following further engagement with families and local stakeholders, including Kent MPs.
7. It is not intended to give a running commentary, but the investigation would like to hear from any families with concerns about maternity services. Ken Sutton and the Secretariat would be happy to hear from any families and to respond to any queries.

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Independent Investigation into East Kent Maternity Services

Secretariat supporting the Independent Investigation:

Ken Sutton – ken.sutton@iekms.org.uk

Ann Ridley – ann.ridley@iekms.org.uk

Website

<https://iekms.org.uk>

Secretariat Office

Independent Investigation into East Kent Maternity Services

The Panorama

Park St

Ashford

TN24 8EZ

07854 575 358